

News

United
States
Department



Bureau of Labor Statistics

Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

Internet address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/home.htm>

INFORMATION: Ann Freely
(215) 597-3282

MEDIA CONTACT: Gerald Perrins
(215) 861-5603

PLS – 3849

TRANSMISSION OF MATERIAL IN
THIS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED
UNTIL 8:30 A.M. (EST)
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2001

WASHINGTON-BALTIMORE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: NOVEMBER 2001

Retail prices in the Washington-Baltimore area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), fell 0.7 percent over the last two months, the largest two-month decrease in four years, the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that a seasonal drop in electricity rates accounted for most of the decline. The CPI-U for the Washington-Baltimore Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) was 2.2 percent higher in November of this year than 12 months ago. (See table A.)

Table A. Percent changes in CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Washington-Baltimore area, not seasonally adjusted

Expenditure category	Change for two months ended			Change for 12 months ended Nov. 2001
	July 2001	Sep. 2001	Nov. 2001	
All items	0.6	0.8	-0.7	2.2
Food & beverages	0.4	0.8	0.1	4.0
Housing	2.3	0.3	-1.1	2.9
Apparel	-5.4	11.8	-3.5	1.4
Transportation	-1.7	-1.5	-2.0	-3.0
Medical care	0.3	0.1	1.2	1.4
Recreation	0.6	0.5	0.1	2.5
Education & communication	1.8	1.6	0.9	5.2
Other goods & services	2.1	2.4	0.9	5.3
Special indexes:				
Energy	3.2	-4.9	-15.2	-15.5
Commodities	-1.0	1.1	-1.3	0.2
Services	2.0	0.6	-0.3	3.7

The housing index fell as usual from September to November, down 1.1 percent, due entirely to lower electricity prices. Electricity prices, which are priced monthly by the Bureau, fell in November (-11.1 percent) and October (-10.6 percent). Due to the recent declines, electricity prices were 10.5 percent below year-ago levels. Moderating the decline in the housing index were higher prices for shelter and household furnishings and operations. Due to higher prices for rent of primary residence and owners' equivalent rent of primary residence, shelter prices rose 0.4 percent over the last two months and were 5.1 percent higher over the year. Prices for household furnishings and operations were up 0.4 percent since September, due to higher priced furniture and bedding, and were 0.6 percent higher than last November. Over the last 12 months, the overall housing index increased 2.9 percent. (See table 1.)

Due entirely to lower gasoline prices, the transportation index fell 2.0 percent over the last two months. Gasoline, which is priced on monthly basis, fell in both November (-9.5 percent) and October (-6.1 percent). Due to declines in 10 of the last 12 months, gasoline prices were 19.8 percent lower than year-ago levels—the largest 12-month decrease since Washington and Baltimore were combined into one metropolitan area. Moderating the decline in the transportation index were higher prices for motor vehicle insurance, new vehicles, and motor vehicle maintenance and repair. The transportation index was down 3.0 percent over year.

Despite higher prices for men's suits, sport coats, and outerwear; furnishings; and footwear, the apparel index fell as it ordinarily does in November. However, the decline was larger than the usual seasonal decrease over the last two months, down 3.5 percent compared with an average of 1.7 percent for the same two-month period during the last four years. Despite the recent decline, the apparel index was up 1.4 percent from last year's level.

The remainder of the categories had higher prices since September. The education and communication index rose 0.9 percent over the last two months and was 5.2 percent higher than 12 months ago.

The medical care index was up 1.2 percent since September, the largest two-month increase in a year. Higher prices for medical care services, in particular hospital services, were largely responsible for the increase. Since last November, medical care prices were up 1.4 percent.

The other goods and services index, which includes tobacco and smoking products, personal care products and services, and personal services such as legal, funeral, and laundry and dry cleaning services, rose 0.9 percent over the last two months and was 5.3 percent higher than 12 months ago.

Food and beverages prices inched up 0.1 percent over the last two months, as higher food at home and alcoholic beverages prices were nearly offset by lower food away from home prices. Food at home prices, which are surveyed monthly by the Bureau, were unchanged in October but rose slightly in November, resulting in a 0.2 percent two-month increase. Over the year, food at home prices were 4.9 percent higher. Alcoholic beverages prices rose 0.4 percent over the last two months and were 5.6 percent higher than last year. Since September, food away from home prices fell slightly, down 0.1 percent. Due to advances in five of the last six bimonthly periods, food away from home prices were 2.6 percent higher than one year ago.

The recreation index edged up 0.1 percent between September and November and was 2.5 percent higher than year-ago levels.

The energy index, which reflects monthly pricing for gasoline and household fuels, fell in both November (-8.8 percent) and October (-7.0 percent) resulting in a two-month decrease of 15.2 percent. The recent decline was due to lower electricity and gasoline prices as natural gas prices rose. Energy prices were down 15.5 percent since last November—the largest 12-month decline since Washington and Baltimore were combined into one metropolitan area.

The CPI-U for the Washington-Baltimore area stood at 110.9 on the November 1996=100 reference base, which means that a market basket of goods and services which averaged \$100.00 in November 1996 would have cost \$110.90 in November. The local Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) fell 0.8 percent since September and was 2.1 percent higher over the year. (See table 2.)

Note: Local area indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. As a result, area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Short-term changes in local indexes may reflect strictly seasonal influences.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Sep. 2001	Oct. 2001	Nov. 2001	Nov. 2000	Sep. 2001	Oct. 2001
All items (1).....	111.7	-	110.9	2.2	-0.7	-
Food and beverages (1).....	109.7	-	109.8	4.0	.1	-
Food (1).....	109.6	-	109.7	3.8	.1	-
Food at home	106.9	106.9	107.1	4.9	.2	0.2
Food away from home (2).....	111.3	-	111.2	2.6	-.1	-
Alcoholic beverages (2).....	107.6	-	108.0	5.6	.4	-
Housing (1).....	114.7	-	113.4	2.9	-1.1	-
Shelter	116.1	116.2	116.6	5.1	.4	.3
Rent of primary residence (1) (3).....	118.7	119.4	120.4	7.2	1.4	.8
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (3).....	115.0	115.5	116.2	5.1	1.0	.6
Fuels and utilities	119.6	-	103.7	-9.7	-13.3	-
Fuels	121.1	111.6	102.6	-11.6	-15.3	-8.1
Gas (piped) and electricity (3).....	120.7	110.6	101.3	-11.4	-16.1	-8.4
Electricity (3).....	125.9	112.5	100.0	-10.5	-20.6	-11.1
Utility natural gas service (3).....	102.2	104.0	105.7	-14.4	3.4	1.6
Household furnishings and operations	104.9	-	105.3	.6	.4	-
Apparel (1).....	104.1	-	100.5	1.4	-3.5	-
Transportation (1).....	107.3	-	105.2	-3.0	-2.0	-
Private transportation	106.4	-	104.1	-3.1	-2.2	-
Motor fuel	120.8	113.4	102.7	-19.6	-15.0	-9.4
Gasoline (all types)	120.7	113.3	102.5	-19.8	-15.1	-9.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular (4).....	120.6	112.6	101.7	-20.6	-15.7	-9.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (4).....	120.9	113.9	102.9	-19.5	-14.9	-9.7
Gasoline, unleaded premium (4).....	120.8	114.0	103.7	-18.4	-14.2	-9.0
Medical care (1).....	110.7	-	112.0	1.4	1.2	-
Recreation	105.9	-	106.0	2.5	.1	-
Education and communication	109.6	-	110.6	5.2	.9	-
Other goods and services (1).....	127.4	-	128.6	5.3	.9	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	107.2	-	105.8	.2	-1.3	-
Commodities less food and beverages	106.2	-	103.6	-2.4	-2.4	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	113.8	-	108.7	-3.2	-4.5	-
Durables	95.7	-	96.6	-1.3	.9	-
Services	114.5	-	114.2	3.7	-.3	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care (1).....	111.7	-	110.8	2.3	-.8	-
All items less shelter	109.4	-	108.1	1.0	-1.2	-
Commodities less food	106.2	-	103.9	-2.0	-2.2	-
Nondurables	111.0	-	108.8	.7	-2.0	-
Nondurables less food	113.2	-	108.6	-2.5	-4.1	-
Services less rent of shelter	112.8	-	111.7	2.2	-1.0	-
Services less medical care services	114.9	-	114.5	3.9	-.3	-
Energy (1).....	117.9	109.6	100.0	-15.5	-15.2	-8.8
All items less energy	110.7	-	111.1	3.6	.4	-
All items less food and energy (1).....	111.6	-	112.1	3.6	.4	-

1 For Washington-Baltimore, index is on a November 1996=100 base.

2 For Washington-Baltimore, index is on a November 1997=100 base.

3 This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series converted to a geometric means estimator in January, 1999.

4 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.

Table 2. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Indexes			Percent change from-		
	Sep. 2001	Oct. 2001	Nov. 2001	Nov. 2000	Sep. 2001	Oct. 2001
All items (1).....	111.6	-	110.7	2.1	-0.8	-
Food and beverages (1).....	109.5	-	109.4	4.2	-.1	-
Food (1).....	109.5	-	109.4	3.9	-.1	-
Food at home	107.1	106.9	106.9	4.8	-.2	0.0
Food away from home (2).....	111.4	-	111.3	2.6	-.1	-
Alcoholic beverages (2).....	107.6	-	107.8	6.2	.2	-
Housing (1).....	114.9	-	113.7	3.1	-1.0	-
Shelter	116.1	116.4	117.0	5.4	.8	.5
Rent of primary residence (1) (3).....	118.6	119.3	120.3	7.1	1.4	.8
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (3).....	114.7	115.3	115.9	4.9	1.0	.5
Fuels and utilities	120.4	-	103.0	-9.7	-14.5	-
Fuels	121.7	111.1	101.9	-11.3	-16.3	-8.3
Gas (piped) and electricity (3).....	121.4	110.3	100.9	-11.0	-16.9	-8.5
Electricity (3).....	125.7	111.7	99.8	-10.1	-20.6	-10.7
Utility natural gas service (3).....	101.1	103.7	106.4	-14.9	5.2	2.6
Household furnishings and operations	103.9	-	104.7	-.3	.8	-
Apparel (1).....	104.9	-	100.8	2.2	-3.9	-
Transportation (1).....	106.6	-	104.5	-3.4	-2.0	-
Private transportation	106.3	-	103.9	-3.7	-2.3	-
Motor fuel	120.8	113.5	102.7	-19.6	-15.0	-9.5
Gasoline (all types)	120.7	113.4	102.5	-19.8	-15.1	-9.6
Gasoline, unleaded regular (4).....	120.5	112.6	101.7	-20.5	-15.6	-9.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (4).....	120.9	114.0	102.9	-19.5	-14.9	-9.7
Gasoline, unleaded premium (4).....	120.9	114.2	103.8	-18.3	-14.1	-9.1
Medical care (1).....	109.6	-	110.7	1.4	1.0	-
Recreation	104.4	-	104.6	2.3	.2	-
Education and communication	107.7	-	108.8	5.1	1.0	-
Other goods and services (1).....	137.3	-	138.8	6.4	1.1	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	108.2	-	106.6	.1	-1.5	-
Commodities less food and beverages	107.9	-	105.3	-2.5	-2.4	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	116.8	-	111.3	-3.0	-4.7	-
Durables	97.5	-	98.4	-1.8	.9	-
Services	114.4	-	114.1	3.9	-.3	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less medical care (1).....	111.6	-	110.6	2.1	-.9	-
All items less shelter	109.6	-	108.0	.8	-1.5	-
Commodities less food	107.9	-	105.5	-2.0	-2.2	-
Nondurables	112.3	-	109.8	.8	-2.2	-
Nondurables less food	115.8	-	110.9	-2.0	-4.2	-
Services less rent of shelter	112.5	-	111.0	2.2	-1.3	-
Services less medical care services	114.8	-	114.4	4.1	-.3	-
Energy (1).....	118.3	109.6	99.8	-15.8	-15.6	-8.9
All items less energy	110.6	-	111.0	3.5	.4	-
All items less food and energy (1).....	111.5	-	112.0	3.5	.4	-

1 For Washington-Baltimore, index is on a November 1996=100 base.

2 For Washington-Baltimore, index is on a November 1997=100 base.

3 This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series converted to a geometric means estimator in January, 1999.

4 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.